SF Examiner 1/5/92

Open the JFK assassination files

No justification any longer exists to keep secret the government records of that terrible day in Dallas 28 years ago

OPENNESS IS the most convincing deflator of a hyped conspiracy. So, releasing all government files on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy is in everyone's interest. The justifications cited to seal the records more than a quarter-century ago are no longer valid. Secrecy has only fueled conspiracy speculation and undermined the credibility of the Warren Commission and the government itself.

Release of the files probably won't get us any closer to unassailable truth about what happened in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, but it would tear away much of the suspicion that a government coverup has existed from that day forward.

William Webster, who has headed both the CIA and the FBI, believes there is no need for the files to remain secret.

Originally, the records were sealed out of concern for the privacy of the Kennedy family and for national security reasons. Harris Wofford, now a Democratic senator from Pennsylvania and once an aide to Robert Kennedy, believes the government wanted to keep the lid on a government-Mafia assassination plot against Fidel Castro. That's now old news. Sensitivity about possible Soviet involvement vanished along with the Soviet Union.

President Bush should issue an executive order opening the government's JFK assassination files, now sealed until 2039. Congress should release its secret files, left by the House Assassinations Committee, which concluded its work more than a decade ago. Sen. Edward Kennedy could expedite the releases by declaring the Kennedy family's support. After 28 years, the need for candor must outweigh delicacy.

The American people deserve full disclosure. Government shouldn't play an *in loco parentis* role in shielding us from the facts. If the Warren Commission did its job, an honest appraisal of all the evidence by the American people will support its verdict.